

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 AF-08 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 101405Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6924

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 4000

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

S E C R E T CAIRO 12217

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LE

SUBJ: ARAB SUMMIT ON LEBANON

REF: (A) JIDDA 6071, (B) CAIRO 12029

1. FAHMY AIDE AMR MUSA, WHO ATTENDED ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL SESSION ON LEBANON, GAVE US FOLLOWING BRIEF RUN-DOWN SEPTEMBER 9.

A. SUMMIT. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT TIMING SHOULD BE THIRD WEEK IN OCTOBER, SINCE IT WAS FELT IMPORTANT (AT LEAST BY GOE) THAT SARKIS BE INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT. FRANJIYA IS A "PARTY" IN THE CIVIL WAR, WHEREAS IT IS HOPED THAT SARKIS WILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION AS HEAD OF STATE. A SECOND REASON FOR POSTPONING SUMMIT WAS THAT MOST GOVERNMENTS PREFER TO HOLD IT AFTER UNGA OPENING. (WE UNDERSTAND SUMMIT WILL BE ON OCT 16) AL HEADQUARTERS IN CAIRO WILL BE VENUE, SINCE ONLY OTHER "OFFER" WAS BEIRUT, AND THIS WAS "GENERALLY" DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE. THE NOTION OF A MINI SUMMIT TO INCLUDE SYRIA, PLO LEBANON (SARKIS), EGYPT, KUWAIT AND SAUD ARABIA (REF A) WAS NOT DISCUSSED DURING FORMAL

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ALCO SESSIONS AND IS AN IDEA WHICH IS NOT YET "RIPE". SAUDIS

AND KUWAITIS ARE BEHIND IT AS THEY HAVE BEEN IN PAST. MUSA ONLY NOTED THAT JORDANIANS WANT TO COME TOO.

B. SYRIA IN COMMAND. MUSA ADMITTED SYRIAN IS NOW IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT BUT NOTED, AS MFA OFFICIALS ARE PRONE TO DO, THAT ASAD IS HAVING SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT HOME. EMBOFF ASKED WHAT SYRIAN PLANNED IN JEZZIN AREA; WOULD THEY GO INTO THE SHOUF. MUSA SAID SYRIANS TREADING VERY CAREFULLY WITH JUMBLATT, FEARING ANY MOVE AGAINST HIM WOULD DEFINITELY CAUSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH SYRIA'S DRUZES. ASKED IF PRAVDA ARTICLE OF SEPTEMBER 8 CRITICIZING BOTH SYRIA AND LEFTISTS WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT, MUSA REPLIED THAT IT WOULD HAVE NONE ON SYRIANS WHO HAVE IGNORED ALL PREVIOUS SOVIET PRESSURE TACTICS.

C. STATUS OF FATAH. EMBOFF OBSERVED THAT NOTION OF CONSOLIDATED NORTHERN FRONT CENTERED IN DAMASCUS WOULD SEEM TO REQUIRE CHANGE IN PLO PERSONNEL, SINCE IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE PRESENT GROUP SITTING DOWN PEACEFULLY WITH HUSAIN. MUSA REPLIED THAT HE HAS BEEN AMAZED THAT SOME PERSONS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH POLITICAL ALLIANCES ARE POSSIBLE. GOE NOW BELIEVES SARAFAT HAS SLIGHTLY STRENGTHENED HIS INTERNAL POSITION. IMPORTANT FACTOR INHIBITING REMOVAL OF ARAFAT IS THAT SECOND ECHELON OF FATAH, ACCORDING TO MUSA, RECOGNIZES THAT WITHOUT HIM INTERNECINE WARFARE WOULD DESTROY THEIR ORGANIZATION. MUSA IMPLIED GOE IS KEEPING UP PRESSURE ON ARAFAT, WHO CONTINUES HIS EFFORTS PLAY OFF ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER, URGING HIM TO GO PUBLIC WITH WEST BANK GAZA STATE. EMBOFF RECALLED QADDUMI'S MUSAWWAR INTERVIEW (REF B) IN WHICH HE SAID THIS NOTION IS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION BY PLO. MUSA THOUGHT THAT THIS IS HOPEFUL SIGN THAT FATAH LEADERSHIP IS BEGINNING TO THINK THE UNTHINKABLE OUT LOUD. HE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT FATAH RANK AND FILE IS NOW MORE LIKELY THAN IN PAST TO SUPPORT ARAFAT SHOULD HE PUBLICLY ENDORSE WEST BANK -GAZA STATE.

2. COMMENT: WE KNOW THAT FAHMY AND KADDAM HAD LONG PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS DURING ALC AND CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT GIVE EGYPT'S OBVIOUS INABILITY INFLUENCE LEBANESE EVENTS, GOE IS PUTTING BEST FACT IT CAN ON MATTERS BY DROPPING PUBLIC CALL FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL BEFORE SUMMIT IN HOPE THAT BY MID-OCTOBER, TRUCE WILL BE ACHIEVED AND SARKIS WILL HAVE

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ESTABLISHED HIMSELF, HOWEVER PRECARIOUSLY, AS A SPOKESMAN FOR ALL LEBANON.
MATTHEWS

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